(1.) The name of the country or similar large area on the label first. Ex.: BRASIL, CENTRAL EUROPE, JAVA, MICRONESIA, etc.

(2.) The state, province, department, or some such minor division second. Ex.: N. Y., Orleans Co.; France, Normandie; China, Fukien Prov.

(3.) The name of the nearest town, or mountain, or river which can be found in an atlas, with directions from that place. Ex.: 20 mi. NNW Arlington; 3,000 ft. NE side White Mt.

(4.) Perhaps the latitude and longitude if necessary.

The date of the collection, the collector's name and the situation in which collected are customarily included with the locality label, but will have to be on a separate label if the above system is followed. The locality label will then become truly a locality label.

SIZE OF McCLAY COLLECTION

Some months ago we asked people to report the size of collections. One or two such reports were published, but little interest has been shown by the majority of our readers. Of course, the number of specimens in a collection is not as important as the condition of the collection, the accuracy of the locality data and the amount of host or situation information that collection offers. But I believe that information of this sort is valuable to the research worker as a further source for material for revisional studies.

Recently I have obtained from A. T. McClay, information as to the size of his personal collection of beetles. I feel that I should preface his figures with some remarks on the excellent quality of his specimens. Dr. McClay was kind enough to loan me his specimens of Oedemeridae for study when I was making my recent revision of the North American species (in press). I found in several cases, long, well mounted series of species known previously only from the type specimens. The locality information greatly increased our knowledge of the distribution of these species.

I know that Dr. McClay is anxious for qualified persons to make use of this material and to give him identifications of those groups in which he is not actively doing research studies. That is of course the only valid reason for maintaining a collection of this sort. I also know that very few persons have taken advantage of Dr. McClay's generosity. I hope this recommendation will result in the mutual benefit of both Dr. McClay and the revisors concerned and I also hope that those who do take this advantage do not ask to borrow material unless they expect to be able to return it within a reasonable time and

take the proper steps to keep it in good condition while it is borrowed. As we all know, it takes a lot of time to collect, mount and label insect material. It costs a great deal to store such material. The greatest respect should be extended to persons who are willing to spend their time in such pursuits and then loan it to others to reap the benefits from studying such material.

The McClay Collection contains 5,250 determined species, 96,000 determined and 233,000 undetermined specimens, making a total of 329,000 in all. Dr. McClay offers 700 species for exchange. The names of those species are available from Dr. McClay upon request.

R. H. A.

A METHOD OF CLEANING INSECTS FOR STUDY

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In attempting to prepare large series of species of Elmidae for a study of morphological variation, difficulty was encountered in cleaning the specimens. Most individuals of this group, and of other families in the DRYOPOIDEA, have an encrustation over much or all of the integument when collected. This coating varies, depending upon the materials in solution in the waters in which these insects live. The thickness and extent of the deposition varies in different genera; causes of this variation are incompletely understood. Even the thinnest layer, however, may be sufficient to mask the characters which are of significance in taxonomic work.

Because no adequate method of cleaning has been available, most of the specimens in collections, including type material, are badly encrusted. As a result, the identification of species has been consistently poor, particularly if comparison with types has not been possible. There is no question but that the unsatisfactory state of taxonomic knowledge which has prevailed until recently in these groups has in large measure been due to the failure of workers to clean their specimens adequately. This may have been due to unsatisfactory working conditions, lack of recognition of the problem, or too high a regard for the integrity of the specimen as it comes from the field. In any case the result has been a muddled taxonomy and poorly organized collections. Keys based upon specific descriptions which utilize only the few characters discernible through the mud or pitch-like accumulations generally have been unsatisfactory. Attempts to use these keys to identify speci-